

Intangible Cultural Heritage Update

News and updates on Newfoundland and Labrador's Intangible Cultural Heritage Program

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Ethnomusicologist wins fellowship

By Janet Harron, reprinted with permission from <http://today.mun.ca>

A Memorial professor of music and folklore who has been a trailblazer in the area of ethnomusicology in Canada has been named a Trudeau Fellow, one of the most prestigious humanities awards in Canada.

This lucrative fellowship, which includes \$225,000 paid over three years, will allow Dr. Beverley Diamond to advance and expand upon her important work.

"It's a huge surprise and a very great honour," said Dr. Diamond. "Although I haven't had time yet to plan what I will do with this generous prize, I feel an enormous weight has lifted. More extensive and creative ways to engage in community consultation about research projects, and even time free to do more writing -- these are the sorts of things that might now be possible."

The Trudeau Foundation is an independent and non-partisan foundation established in 2002 to "promote outstanding research in the humanities and social sciences and foster a fruitful dialogue between scholars and policy makers."

Every year, the foundation selects up to five fellows from diverse streams of the humanities who are working in key areas such as human rights and social justice, responsible citizenship, Canada and the world, and humans and their natural environment.

The rigorous nomination process is designed to award these highly accomplished Canadians who question society's worldviews and teach the importance of responsible and engaged citizenship.

Dr. Diamond was cited by the foundation as "an exceptional leader in conserving and promoting Aboriginal and Canadian traditional music and exploring contemporary media."

Every community has stories worth telling...and preserving.

By Diana Quinton, Stories Worth Telling

Melvin Green walked through the Wooden Boat and Community Museum in Winterton. "I used to go to school in this building, and later I taught here," he reflected. "The students took turns adding coal to the pot-belly stove to make sure our classroom was warm." Green pointed to the stage, "And here's where I performed in school concerts."

Green's memories of growing up in Winterton are echoed throughout the province. Life stories are part of our intangible cultural heritage. Many community heritage organizations have begun recording stories of people within their communities. These stories can be used various ways, such as profiling them in a book.

There are many different aspects to a book project: undertaking oral history interviews; transcribing interview materials; writing and editing the narrative; collecting photos and other memorabilia; and publishing and launching the book. Often, community heritage organizations need help to complete one or more of the tasks involved.

Story practitioners, such as Diana Quinton from Stories Worth Telling, are available to work with community groups. Quinton has a background in planning, writing, and project management. "I develop and promote projects related to preserving stories," explained Quinton. "Books are a classic way to preserve stories because they are timeless and beautiful. Plus, they have commercial potential which can be attractive to community groups."

Quinton believes solid planning is behind any successful book project. She recommends that community groups decide on the focus of their book early on in the process. "Ideas for book projects are endless and can get quite overwhelming. Community groups should ask themselves: What is the story about? Who will tell the story? Where does the story happen? What time period? Why is the story significant?"

Before the project starts, Quinton also suggests getting others involved. "People within the community may be willing to contribute time and resources to the project. Also, the Cultural Economic Development Program, delivered through the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, may be able to offer some financial support for research and development. Depending on the project, we can help community heritage organizations prepare proposals for financial assistance."

According to Quinton, every community has stories worth telling. "I customize my approach depending on the needs of my clients. I can guide them through the process - through workshops or individual coaching - or I can implement the project for them," said Quinton. For more information on her services, visit www.storiesworthtelling.ca, or e-mail diana@storiesworthtelling.ca.



Top Photo: Melvin Green shows a half model of a wooden boat. Green is a resident of Winterton, Trinity Bay. He is a retired teacher and board member of the Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador.



Stories Worth Telling plans and develops manageable book projects for communities, businesses and families.

Jack-of-All-Trades

Written By Anita O'Keefe with contributions by Margie Hatfield and excerpts from files of Town of Placentia Cultural Office

The Town of Placentia takes great pride in highlighting one of its senior residents who was interviewed under its Cultural Information Gathering Project.

Mr. Freeman Upshall, born in 1922 on Dicks Island, says he has many fond memories of growing up in Kingwell. Speaking of school days he explains, "There was primary, intermediate and prelim."

Cutting the winter wood he said is like shopping for groceries today, "You had so much longers for your wharf, so many pickets for your fence, so many rails for your fence, plus you had to get fifteen hundred sticks of firewood."

They were busy, but fun-filled times he recalls. He laughs as he recounts a story of when the local merchant tried to sell tar to his uncle by the yard. He wittily adds, "Now you know you can't measure tar like that." It was all in good fun. He remembers a lady who was known as a water diviner, being able to locate water in the ground and another lady who was able to charm toothaches away.

He began working at age fourteen coasting to Sydney, Nova Scotia with his uncle. He worked with the Canadian Hydrographic Service surveying the islands of Placentia Bay. He has tried his hand at most everything, from eel fishing to lobster fishing; bank fishing to working on the whalers. He has packed a lot in his 87 years and is still going strong.

A talented craftsman, Mr. Upshall has made model and full size boats, eel traps and lobster pots. His model of the "Matthew" is currently on display at the Quidi Vidi Brewing Company in St. John's. Some of his hobbies include making door-knockers and ornament lighthouses. This is only a fraction of what the man has done or can do. In trying to sum it up, he says with a chuckle, "Let's say it this way, I was Jack-of-All-Trades, and master of none." However, it is our opinion, he has mastered many.



Mr. Upshall moved to Placentia with his family in 1967 under the Resettlement Program. Reflecting on the move, he says matter-of-factly, "Centralization should never have been, cause the government never had to keep a family out on them islands," being thankful that he has had a good life in Placentia with his late wife (Mable Warren) and two sons (Eugene and Andy).

Just recently, Mr. Upshall shared his information on various topics through a demonstration at a Living RICH (Rural Intangible Cultural Heritage) Forum coordinated by Heritage partners in the region. As well, he participated in the Heritage Week celebrations hosted by the Town of Placentia where the audience was also treated to a special performance by Mr. Upshall as he "boxed the compass."

"Free" as he is called by many local residents and childhood friends certainly sums up his generosity in one word. Freeman Upshall is a man of many talents and much knowledge. He is extremely generous with the sharing of his information, providing articulate explanations, and freely distributes his smiles and humor. The Town of Placentia salutes Mr. Freeman Upshall.

“Heritage: Lest we Forget”

By Robert Smith, L'Anse au Loup

In a world so fast-paced and bent on progress and moving ahead, we often forget to take a look back to the past and see the colorful picture painted for us by our ancestors. History and heritage have been the building blocks of society here on the Labrador Straits for hundreds of years.

Through word of mouth and recorded stories we have passed down our knowledge and practices from generation to generation, but now with the advent of electronic technology and our fast paced lifestyle, along with the passing of a large percentage of our senior population, our traditions and customs are slowly becoming more and more at risk of being lost.



It is extremely important that we take measures to preserve and protect our heritage. Let's face it: Most of our people's history even today is still word-of-mouth, told often at family gatherings or over a cup of afternoon tea and lemon cream biscuits.

Although there have been numerous

projects over the years aiming to capture and record these stories of old from our grandparents and parents, there still exists an alarming amount of history unrecorded. Without our efforts, these tales will soon only be remembered by the hills and the stars.

Let's take our rich heritage of making crafts, clothing and tools. Fewer and fewer youth are taking an interest in learning the art of snowshoe making, the making of sealskin boots, and komatik making. Personally, I do not know of anyone who which in the past 10 years that I can remember, has learned the craft of snowshoe making.

Also, it seems that only a handful of adults in their 30-50s posses these skills, save perhaps komatik making. It is so important that these arts be preserved and practiced so that future generations of youth be able to take up the practice and keep our precious heritage from being lost.

Projects such as the “Them Days” series of books, instructional workshops for the making of crafts like snowshoes and oral history projects like the one which is currently being carried out here in the Labrador Straits region are so important in maintaining and preserving the level of cultural heritage which separates Newfoundland and Labrador from the rest of the world, and which unites us as a people.

We need to all have the initiative to take a piece of our heritage into our hearts and keep the tradition alive. The future of Labradorians as a people depend on it.



Robert Smith is an 18 year old living in L'Anse au Loup, NL and a grade 12 student at Mountain Field Academy in Forteau, NL. He is an avid cyclist and photographer and loves any activity that brings him closer to nature. Rob runs his own photography and computer repair businesses, and has an online photography portfolio at <http://www.photographyrob.com>. He writes, “After finding my love for photography over two years ago, I have seen this land in a way that others might miss, often seeing the beauty in the most overlooked places, especially our heritage sites such as the Point Amour Lighthouse and fishing stages and boats. Through my photography I hope to help others realize what rich culture and beauty exists right in front of them, and help foster a greater appreciation for our great land and the environment.” Rob is this year's winner of a scholarship started by the Labrador Straits Women's Institute, writing on the theme “Why is preserving the history of the Labrador Straits region important?”

Hearty Fare on the High Seas

By Kathleen Tucker, Ship Cove

According to local lore, fish tastes best eaten over salt water. Whether a fisherman cooks his dinner in the cuddy of the boat or on the beach over a driftwood fire, there is something about the salt sea air that whets the appetite and adds flavor to the food in the pot.

Before refrigeration and modern packaging, food had to be made and kept in such a way that it wouldn't spoil when men were out fishing for months at a time. Hard bread—a kiln-dried cake—was ideal for carrying on board the boat because it lasted much longer than fresh bread. One of the oldest traditional meals in Newfoundland is Fish and Brewis or Fisherman's Brewis. The names are similar but the way the food is served differs and, according to some fishermen, that makes all the difference in the flavour. With Fish and Brewis the salt fish, brewis (or hard bread) and potatoes are cooked and served separately on the plate. With Fisherman's Brewis, everything is cooked—or 'manged'—together. Both recipes are topped with fried salt pork and onions.

Fishermen often resorted to simpler means than salt fish and hard bread if they were only out on the water for the day. A fire was lit, the bakepot placed over the fire, and salt pork and onions fried. Fresh fish was added next and, when it was cooked, pieces of bread were torn from a loaf and placed in the pot. The meal was then stirred and ready to eat. Often everybody ate from the same pot with spoons carved from driftwood. Some call this Fisherman's Brewis, but the most common name in this area is pararah.

Kathleen Tucker is working on an oral history project in the St. Anthony area. You can reach her with your stories at kmtucker@nf.aibn.com.



Letters to the Editor

Hi Dale,

I am most interested in the article in the latest newsletter (*Issue No 004, March 2009*) regarding "wrigglin' fences". When I was much younger than I am now, they were quite a common sight here in the Carbonear area, but personally, the only name I ever heard applied to them was "garden rod fences". In fact, there is a small pond not far from my home called "Garden Rod Gully" where, I presume, rods were traditionally cut for fences. (I am speculating about that.)

Garden rod fences disappeared from this area, probably in the late 1950s.

Then, maybe eight or ten years ago, I was intrigued to see a man on Valley Road in Carbonear building one. I called a friend of mine who worked for the Carbonear "Compass" weekly newspaper and suggested that they might want to do a feature story about this revival of an old tradition. The paper followed up on my suggestion and produced an interesting article, after interviewing the owner. However, the owner called the fence a "ringle rod fence" or a "wringle rod fence" (I can't quite recall exactly) which term I had never heard before, but it seems to coincide with the term "wrigglin" in today's newsletter.

Duncan Howell, Carbonear

P.S. The fence on Valley Road is still standing and still the only one of its kind around here.

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